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FILLERS FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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Week of November 21, 1983

LABOR DEPARTMENT INVESTIGATORS HONORED

WASHINGTON -- Secretary of Labor Raymond J. Donovan participated in a ceremony honoring two Labor Department investigators who exposed union racketeering and organized crime control of New York's Fulton Fish Market.

Fred Ferrone and Wesley M. Walker, who is black, received the Excalibur Award. Both are special agents for the Labor Department Inspector General's Office of Organized Crime and Racketeering in New York City. They led a multi-agency probe culminating in 48 indictments, 44 convictions and fines exceeding $300,000.

The investigation also led to the conviction of major organized crime figures who had headed the United Seafood Workers Union, Local 359. The Fulton Fish Market handles $750 million worth of fish yearly and its activities involve the entire Atlantic seaboard.

"I am extremely proud," Secretary Donovan said, "of the work which Fred Ferrone and Wesley Walker did for their government and for the people of the United States.

"Because their investigation uncovered organized crime control of a segment of an important union and an important industry, the Labor Department was able to fulfill in a most significant way its mission of protecting the rights of American workers to proper and honest administration of their union pension and welfare funds.

"I am pleased to be able to join in honoring these men for their outstanding contributions. They are two of the thousands of Labor Department employees whose daily work adds to the well-being of the working men and women of our Nation."

Secretary Donovan pointed out that Ferrone and Walker were recently honored at the Seventeenth Annual Awards Dinner of the Association of Federal Investigators, when they were recognized as Criminal Investigators of the Year.

The Excalibur Award is presented annually by Congressman Michael Barnes to federal civilian and military employees for excellence in public service.

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Week of November 21, 1983

OSHA EXTENDS TO DEC. 23 COMMENT PERIOD
FOR PROPOSED CONSULTATION REGULATIONS

WASHINGTON -- In response to several requests, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration has extended from Nov. 4, 1983 to Dec. 23, 1983 the public comment period for proposed changes in its consultation program, the Labor Department announced.

The extension will allow interested parties the additional time they require to prepare adequate responses to the OSHA proposal. Further, at the request of various commentors, OSHA has added the following documents to the record: a list of state agencies which provide consultation; an agency notice covering OSHA's experimental program of offering inspection exemptions to employers undergoing consultations; and a letter from the director of the California/OSHA Consultation Service describing the impact of the state's experimental exemption program.

OSHA has also included the following: the most recent evaluation reports on state consultation projects; testimony on proposed revisions to the consultation regulation before the National Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (NACOSH); comments by a subcommittee of NACOSH on an earlier draft of the proposed revisions; and a Solicitor of Labor opinion on release to the public of consultant reports to employers.

As proposed Oct. 5, OSHA's consultation program would be expanded to focus more on employer safety and health programs, cover employer and employee training and education, include off-site as well as on-site assistance, and provide inspection exemptions for employers.

Available in every state except Louisiana, OSHA's consultation program is free to employers who request assistance in locating and eliminating hazards in their workplaces. No citations or penalties are involved, and an employer's only obligation is to agree, in advance of the consultant's visit, to correct any serious hazards the consultant finds.

Written comments, in quadruplicate, should be submitted to the Docket Officer, Docket No. C-1, Room S6212, 200 Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210. Comments must be postmarked no later than Dec. 23, 1983. Comments, and the additional materials submitted for the record, may be reviewed and copied at the OSHA Docket Office during normal business hours.

A notice announcing the extension of the comment period for OSHA's consultation regulations is scheduled for publication in the Nov. 4 Federal Register.

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Week of November 21, 1983

REPORT ON QUALITY CHANGES FOR 1984
MODEL PASSENGER CARS

WASHINGTON -- The value of quality changes for the 1984 model domestic passenger cars in the Producer Price Index averaged $91.87 at the manufacturing level and $110.08 at the retail level, according to estimates of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor.

The estimates represent about 50.0 percent of the average increase of $183.65 in producers' prices and about 49.7 percent of the average increase of $221.70 in manufacturers' suggest list prices.

These estimates are based on a review by BLS of data supplied by automobile producers for 17 similarly equipped 1983 and 1984 model domestic cars priced in the Producer Price Index. These estimates of quality change are used in the Producer Price Index for October. Additionally, these data are used to make similar adjustments in the Consumer Price Index and in the International Price Program.

The $110.08 estimated retail value of the quality change breaks down as follows:

- $58.89 for changes to improve fuel economy and to reduce emissions in accordance with current and anticipated Federal standards.

- A negative adjustment of $12.09 for revisions to bumper systems in accordance with the relaxed Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 215 Part 581 Bumper Standard.

- $63.28 for other changes not related to fuel economy, air quality, or bumper standards such as changes to standard equipment and changes for improved corrosion protection.

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Week of November 21, 1983

PRODUCER PRICE INDEXES--OCTOBER 1983

WASHINGTON -- The Producer Price Index for Finished Goods moved up 0.3 percent from September to October on a seasonally adjusted basis, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported.

This increase was about the same as in most other recent months. The index for intermediate goods advanced 0.3 percent, somewhat less than in most other recent months. Crude material prices edged down 0.2 percent, after climbing sharply in August and moving up moderately in September.

Among finished goods, price increases accelerated for consumer foods, and the capital equipment index rose slightly following a small dip in September. The finished energy goods index edged down slightly after rising modestly in each of the 3 preceding months. The index for finished consumer goods other than foods and energy was unchanged; this index has shown little or no change in most months of 1983.

Before seasonal adjustment, the Producer Price Index for Finished Goods climbed 1.0 percent to 287.9 (1967=100). Over the year, the Finished Goods Price Index moved up 1.3 percent. Prices for finished consumer foods increased 2.6 percent from October 1982 to October 1983, the finished energy goods index declined 6.0 percent, the index for finished consumer goods other than foods and energy rose 2.2 percent, and capital equipment prices advanced 2.7 percent. The Producer Price Index for intermediate goods increased 2.0 percent over the year, and crude material prices were 4.0 percent higher than a year earlier.

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FILLERS FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

The responsibility for carrying out the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) is assigned to the U.S. Department of Labor, the Internal Revenue Service of the U.S. Treasury Department, and a non-profit government corporation named the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

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The chief purposes of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) are to protect the interests of workers and their beneficiaries under private pension and welfare plans. The act provides, among other things, that workers are not required to satisfy unreasonable age and service requirements before becoming eligible for pension plan participation, and that persons who work for a specified minimum period under a pension plan are assured of at least some pension at retirement age.

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